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Introduction

Indeed all praise is due to Allāh, we praise Him and we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evil of ourselves and the evil of our actions. Whomsoever Allāh guides, no one can misguide him; and whomsoever He does not guide, no one can guide him. We testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

To proceed:

Although there have been a few books on polygyny in the English language, these books have dealt primarily with the rules and regulations of the practice. However, our aim in this book is not to explain or delve into such. Though we have briefly touched on some of the rulings, the main purpose of this book is to enable and empower Muslim women to seek the most correct way of thinking and feeling about polygyny. With this book we believe that the scope is tremendous and different in that there is no other literature available in the English language that is similar.

This book was born out of what we saw as a necessity to help and advise women experiencing polygyny, in a loving but truthful manner. It is very common to see this matter discussed with one of two extremes. One extreme being that polygyny is loved and anyone who doesn't love it is an impious, neglectful woman; and the other extreme being

that polygyny should not be practiced because women are worth more than that and any woman who does practice it must be forced to do so. Clearly neither of these opinions is helpful, and in most cases is very damaging. So this is, along with many other reasons, why we decided to undertake the task of creating a reference, a friend, a comforter, a teacher, and a shoulder to cry on, all in one book.

It is our strong belief that every Muslim woman is touched in some way by polygyny, whether briefly or intimately.

Whatever the means or the way her individual experience with polygyny happens, we have tried to include in this book all of the necessary tools for her to be successful in controlling and overcoming difficulties.

We've taken into account that some Muslim women will experience polygyny only through the experiences of their friends, so we've provided tools in this book that will allow those Muslim women to be helpful, loving, but always truthful friends. Other Muslim women will first experience polygyny through their husbands voicing the desire to marry again, so for these Muslim women we've included a wealth of comfort and information that will allow them to deal with their situations appropriately. And for other Muslim women, they might be immersed in polygyny suddenly and shockingly, so for them we've provided understanding, advice, motivation, clarity, examples, experiences, answers, and of course lots of love. So, however a Muslim woman may experience polygyny, we've tried to pave a way for her, making it easier, or at

the very least more endurable.

With all of the tools, comfort, and advice we offer in this book, one of the most important features is that we've placed the responsibility of illustrating and modeling the Muslim woman's role and feelings in polygyny, on the wives of the Prophet ﷺ. There is no better example to follow than that of these superb women. It might be surprising to see that they were women of jealousy and passion for their husband, and more so than any women now, because after all, they were married to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Although many Muslim sisters feel as if these women were of such elite status that they couldn't possibly attain their greatness, it is our feeling that although the Muslim woman may never be Aishah ؓ, she is certainly most capable of being *Mu'min* and behaving to the best of her ability. Without emulating the example of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ we are left with using today's scarred practice of polygyny as an example—clearly not a good idea.

Every feature of this book is meant to deal with polygyny and all of the feelings that go with it, understanding that most Muslim women are in a monogamous state of mind. As a result, polygyny causes many Muslim women to become depressed, angry, deeply pained, and fearful. It is our hope that this book will help Muslim women dealing with polygyny advance to a point where their hearts are free from these feelings. From our hearts we have tried to offer a way through, with insights and survival tools, reflections of women who have succeeded, truthful and loving advice,

and most importantly, a necessary reminder of our final destiny.

Although this book is geared mainly towards women, we hope it will be a very helpful book for Muslim men also. *In sha' Allāh*, this book can give men some insight into the emotional affects of polygyny on women, which they can use to make sound and wise decisions.

We pray that Allāh makes this work a benefit for the Muslims and we pray that all Muslim women will be of the survivors, replenished with happiness and peace, that they will find strength within that is unwavering, and that we are all increased with *Taqwa* (righteousness), *Sabr* (patience) and *Iman* (faith).

Umm AbdurRahman Hirschfelder
Umm Yasmeen Rahmaan
October 2002/Shā'ban 1423

Publisher's Note

The book we are presenting here covers a subject that has not been discussed or published before. Although one finds books on polygamy or polygyny some refuting them and some asserting them, but this presentation is quite different from them as it discusses the issue entirely in psychological and realistic ways.

We must say that the authors have dealt with the subject covering all the aspects that had had to be discussed. They have used statistics, conducted researches, arranged interviews, provided solutions, and exposed the real attitudes in this regard. They have presented the ideal and most practical way to deal with the important issues of our life: by making the mind as the authority to decide about the matters instead of our emotions. They have shown how to analyze a situation and seek the possible ways that can produce better results. In fact, this logic of resolving the issues and solving the problems can be applied to every situation to benefit from.

In short, the book tells us to see the facts of life in their true perspective without exaggerating or minimizing them from their actual conditions - and that is the most objective method to deal with our lives and the lives of others.